

CREDIBILITY GAP: BUSH AND PORT SECURITY

With President Bush on Monday touting port security, his rhetoric is running up against contrary reality. Specifically, while the Coast Guard has said that there are almost \$1 billion in port security needs, and while the Customs Service has urgently requested \$67 million for the Container Security Initiative, Bush has refused for more than a year to request any money for these purposes. Today, Congress has only funded \$400 million for port security grants, and only \$22 million (or 32% of what is necessary) for the Container Security Initiative.

BUSH PHOTO-OP	RHETORIC	REALITY
 <p>Bush touts port security in NJ [6/24/02]</p>	<p>“We’re working hard to make sure your job is easier, that the port is safer. The Customs Service is working with overseas ports and shippers to improve its knowledge of container shipments, assessing risk so that we have a better feel of who we ought to look at, what we ought to worry about.” – Bush, 6/24/2002</p>	<p>Bush’s FY2003 budget proposal provided <u>zero for port security grants</u>. Additionally, his budget <u>included no money for the Container Security Initiative</u>, which the Administration’s own Customs Service said needed approximately \$67 million.</p>
 <p>Bush vetoes money for port security [8/13/02]</p>	<p>On August 26th, 2002, the Bush-appointed U.S. Customs Commissioner told Congress that the Container Security Initiative was at “the forefront of our government’s effort to secure the Nation from the potential terrorist threat using cargo containers” adding that it is “a major piece of the President’s National Strategy for Homeland Security.”</p>	<p>Unfortunately, on August 13th, <u>Bush actually vetoed \$39 million for the Container Security Initiative</u> passed on a bipartisan basis by Congress. Upon his veto, Bush said, “At the end of the session, Congress sent along more than \$5 billion in extra spending I didn’t ask for...I made my opposition clear. We were pretty plain-spoken about the supplemental...I understand their position, and today, they’re going to learn mine. We’ll spend none of it.”[8/13/2002]</p>
 <p>Bush gives State of the Union promising that our nation’s ports are more secure [1/28/03]</p>	<p>“We’ve intensified security at...ports of entry.” – Bush 2003 State of the Union</p>	<p>Just a week after this speech, Bush submitted his 2004 budget that once again included <u>no money for port security grants</u>. This budget decision came just two months after the Coast Guard’s December report indicating that the first year cost of port security is at least \$963 million and that total costs over the next decade are \$4.4 billion.</p>
 <p>Bush touts War and Homeland Security Supplemental Budget request which he says includes port security funding [3/25/03]</p>	<p>Upon introducing his War and Homeland Security Supplemental Budget Request, the White House issues a fact sheet promising that the bill will “increase inspection of high-risk goods and cargo at ports-of-entry.” - White House release, 3/25/03]</p>	<p>Amazingly, Bush’s supplemental request once again included <u>no money for port security grants or the Container Security Initiative</u>.</p>